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DETAILED ACTION

Notice to Applicant(s)

1. This application has been examined. Claims 1-19 are pending.

The prior art submitted on 5/17/06 has been considered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-19, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

As per claims 1-19, it is unclear as to what is "a reference direction" in the claims invention.

Claim 5 recites the limitation "the target object" in line 3. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

3. Claims 18-19, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. "A computer program", in line 1, should claim as stored in a readable storage medium. A suggestion for line 1 is "A computer readable storage medium storing a program".

Correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

5. Claims 1-5, 7-10, and 13-19, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Nohara et al. (6904358).

As per claim 1, Nohara et al. disclose a map providing apparatus that receives, from a portable terminal including at least a display unit, a piece of position information indicating a location point of the portable terminal and transmits, to the portable terminal, a map image that corresponds to the received piece of position information, the map providing apparatus comprising: a reference direction specifying unit that specifies a reference direction that is required when a user of the portable terminal brings the map image displayed on the display unit of the portable terminal into correspondence with actual directions, based on the piece of position information received from the portable terminal (see column 1, lines 31-59); a reference direction information generating unit that generates a piece of reference direction information for having the user of the portable terminal understand the reference direction specified by the reference direction specifying unit (see columns 1-2, lines 60-26; and column 5, lines 11-45); and a transmitting unit that transmits the piece of reference direction information generated by the reference direction information generating unit to the portable terminal, together with the map image (see column 2, lines 27-58; and columns 5-6, lines 46-11).

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As per claim 2, Nohara et al. disclose the reference direction information generating unit generates the piece of reference direction information as an image to be displayed, together with the map image, on the display unit of the portable terminal (see column 5, lines 11-45).

As per claim 3, Nohara et al. disclose a map image editing unit that embeds the piece of reference direction information generated by the reference direction information generating unit into the map image (see column 1, lines 31-59), wherein the transmitting unit transmits, to the portable terminal, the map image into which the piece of reference direction information has been embedded by the map image editing unit (see columns 5-6, lines 46-11).

As per claim 4, Nohara et al. disclose a map direction specifying unit that specifies the map direction in the map image to be transmitted by the transmitting unit (see column 6, lines 12-56), wherein the reference direction specifying unit specifies the reference direction with respect to the map direction specified by the map direction specifying unit (see columns 5-6, lines 46-11).

As per claim 5, Nohara et al. disclose the target object is a shadow formed by sunlight, and the reference direction specifying unit specifies a shadow direction to which the shadow extends, based on a date and time at which the transmitting unit transmits the piece of reference direction information and the piece of position information (see column 11, lines 3-64).

As per claim 7, Nohara et al. disclose the target object is an astronomical object, and the reference direction specifying unit specifies a direction of the astronomical object with respect to the location point, based on the piece of position information and the piece of date and time information (see column 11, lines 3-64).

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As per claim 8, Nohara et al. disclose the target object is a landmark, and the map providing apparatus further comprises a storing unit that stores therein a piece of position information that indicates a position of the landmark (see columns 6-7, lines 57-18), and the reference direction specifying unit specifies a direction of the landmark with respect to the location point, based on the piece of position information of the landmark being stored in the position information storing unit and the piece of position information that indicates the location position and has been received by the receiving unit (see column 7, lines 18-50).

As per claim 9, Nohara et al. disclose the position information storing unit stores therein a plurality of landmarks including the landmark and pieces of position information each of which indicates a location point of a different one of the landmarks, while keeping the landmarks in correspondence with the pieces of positional information (see columns 7-8, lines 51-8), the map providing apparatus further comprises a landmark selecting unit that selects, out of the position information storing unit, the landmark corresponding to the piece of reference direction information that is to be transmitted to the portable terminal, based on the piece of position information of the portable terminal and the piece of position information of the landmark (see column 8, lines 9-44), and the reference direction specifying unit specifies the direction of the landmark selected by the landmark selecting unit (see columns 8-9, lines 45-14).

As per claim 10, Nohara et al. disclose the landmark selecting unit selects the landmark based on the direction of the landmark with respect to the location point of the portable terminal (see columns 8-9, lines 45-14).

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As per claim 13, Nohara et al. disclose a portable terminal on which a map image is to be displayed, comprising: a receiving unit that receives the map image (see the abstract); a reference direction specifying unit that specifies a reference direction that is required when the map image received by the receiving is brought into correspondence with actual directions, based on a piece of position information that indicates a location point of the portable terminal (see columns 2-3, lines 59-2); a reference direction information generating unit that generates a piece of reference direction information for having a user of the portable terminal understand the reference direction specified by the reference direction specifying unit (see columns 9-10, lines 15-10); and a display unit that displays the piece of reference direction information generated by the reference direction information generating unit, together with the map image (see column 4, lines 3-47).

As per claim 14, Nohara et al. disclose the display unit displays the map image and the piece of reference direction information simultaneously (see column 4, lines 3-47).

As per claim 15, Nohara et al. disclose the receiving unit further receives a piece of map direction information that indicates a map direction that is a direction in the map image (see column 4, lines 3-47), and the reference direction specifying unit specifies the reference direction with respect to the map direction, based on the piece of map direction information received by the receiving unit (see columns 4-5, lines 48-10).

Claim 16, is a method claim corresponding to apparatus claim 1 above. Therefore, it is rejected for the same rationales set forth as above.

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Claim 17, is a method claim corresponding to portable terminal claim 1 above.

Therefore, it is rejected for the same rationales set forth as above.

As per claim 18, Nohara et al. disclose a computer program for realizing a map providing method of receiving, from a portable terminal including at least a display unit, a piece of position information indicating a location point of the portable terminal and transmitting, to the portable terminal, corresponding to the received piece of position information, on a computer, the computer program causing the computer to execute: specifying a reference direction that is required when a user of the portable terminal brings the map image displayed on the display unit of the portable terminal into correspondence with actual directions, based on the piece of position information received from the portable terminal (see column 1, lines 31-59); generating a piece of reference direction information for having the user of the portable terminal understand the reference direction specified at the specifying (see columns 1-2, lines 60-26; and column 5, lines 11-45); and transmitting the piece of reference direction information generated at generating to the portable terminal, together with the map image see column 2, lines 27-58; and columns 5-6, lines 46-11).

As per claim 19, Nohara et al. disclose a computer program for realizing a map displaying method of displaying a map image on a portable terminal, on a computer, the computer program causing the computer to execute: receiving the map image (see the abstract); specifying a reference direction that is required when the map image received at the receiving is brought into correspondence with actual directions, based on a piece of position information that indicates a location point of the portable terminal (see columns 2-3, lines 59-2); generating a piece of reference direction information for having a user of the portable terminal understand the

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reference direction specified at specifying (see columns 9-10, lines 15-10); and displaying the piece of reference direction information generated at generating, together with the map image ((see column 4, lines 3-47).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 11-12, are rejected under 35 U.S.C.103(a) as being unpatentable over Nohara et al. (6904358) in view of Mura Smith (6127945).

As per claim 11, Nohara et al. do not disclose a route to a destination. However, Mura Smith discloses the transmitting unit transmits a map image showing a route to a destination desired by the user, and the landmark selecting unit selects the landmark, further based on a direction of the destination with respect to the location point of the portable terminal (see columns 8-9, lines 45-61). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the teach of Nohara et al. by combining a route to a destination for providing navigation guidance to the user.

As per claim 12, Mura Smith discloses the landmark selecting unit selects the landmark, based on a distance between the location point and the landmark (see column 8, lines 9-44).

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8. Claim 6, is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

9. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:

. Muramatsu (6992583)

. Snapp et al. (US 2003/0069693 A1)

10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dalena Tran whose telephone number is 571-272-6968. The examiner can normally be reached on M-W (in a first week of a bi-week), and T-R (in a second week of bi-week) from 7:00AM-6:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Khoi H. Tran can be reached on 571-272-6919. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Dalena Tran/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3664